

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACT 1124

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 6010

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR, BL

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BANZER ASKS POSTPONEMENT HIS VISIT TO
U.S.

DEPARTMENT PASS WHITE HOUSE

1. ACCOMPANIED BY DCM, I CALLED UPON ACTING FOREIGN
MINISTER CESPEDES TODAY (OCT 2) AT 5 P.M. AT LATTER'S
REQUEST. MARCELO OSTRIA FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL, WAS
ALSO PRESENT.

2. CESPEDES OPENED CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT HE HAD
BEEN ASKED BY PRESIDENT BANZER TO CONVEY TO ME THE
PRESIDENT'S DESIRE THAT HIS VISIT TO THE U.S. BE POSTPONED.
THE PRESIDENT, SAID CESPEDES, REGRETTED EXCEEDINGLY THE
NEED TO POSTPONE HIS VISIT BUT BELIEVED NO OTHER COURSE
WAS POSSIBLE GIVEN THE LIKELIHOOD OF HEIGHTENED POLITICAL
TENSION AND POSSIBLE UNREST WHICH WOULD FOLLOW THE ANNOUNCEMENT
OF ECONOMIC MEASURES WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED
WERE REQUIRED. CESPEDES WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE ACTING
PRESIDENT IN BANZER'S ABSENCE, FONMINISTER GUTIERREZ,
WOULD NOT HAVE THE FORCE TO DEAL WITH WHAT WELL MIGHT BE
AN EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT SITUATION, PARTICULARLY IF THE OTHER
PARTY IN THE BANZER COALITION WERE TO FAIL TO GIVE ITS
SUPPORT TO THE CONTEMPLATED ECONOMIC MEASURES. INASMUCH
AS THE BOLIVIAN ARMED FORCES MIGHT HAVE TO BE CALLED
UPON TO DEAL WITH SUBSEQUENT DISORDERS, IT WAS FAR PREFERABLE
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THAT PRESIDENT BANZER, AS A MILITARY MAN, OVERSEE THE
GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSES TO ADVERSE POPULAR REACTION TO THE
MEASURES RATHER THAN LEAVING THE TASK TO FONMINISTER
GUTIERREZ, A CIVILIAN.

3. IN REPLY, I SAID THAT I TOO REGRETED THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE VISIT. I SAID, HOWEVER, THAT PLANNING FOR THE VISIT HAD REACHED AN ADVANCED STAGE AND THAT IT WOULD NOT BE AN EASY MATTER TO RE-PROGRAM THE VISIT AT ANY TIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE. I SPECIFICALLY ASKED CESPEDES WHETHER THE PRESIDENT UNDERSTOOD THE DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN SCHEDULING STATE VISITS TO THE U.S., GIVEN THE DEMANDS ON PRESIDENT NIXON'S SCHEDULE. CESPEDES REPLIED THAT PRESIDENT BANZER AND THE GOB DID IN FACT UNDERSTAND THIS.

4. IN THE COURSE OF OCTOBER 3, CESPEDES WILL DELIVER TO THE EMBASSY FOR TRANSMISSION TO PRESIDENT NIXON A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT BANZER ON HIS WISH THAT THE VISIT BE POSTPONED. THE EMBASSY WILL OF COURSE TRANSMIT THE TEXT OF THIS LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT VIA IMMEDIATE NIACT TELEGRAM. ALLOWING FOR SUFFICIENT TIME FOR THE RECEIPT OF THE MESSAGE IN WASHINGTON, THE GOB WILL THEN MAKE A BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT HERE, IN THE EXPECTATION OF A SIMULTANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENT IN WASHINGTON, THAT THE VISIT HAS BEEN POSTPONED. THIS WILL PROBABLY OCCUR ON THURSDAY OCT 4.

5. AS REGARDS ANY QUESTIONS I MIGHT RECEIVE FROM THE PRESS FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION OF MY CREDENTIALS ON OCTOBER 3, IT WAS AGREED THAT I VOLUNTEER NOTHING ON THE VISIT. IF ASKED, I WOULD SIMPLY SAY THAT PRESIDENT BANZER WOULD OF COURSE RECEIVE A WARM WELCOME WHEN HE VISITS THE U.S.
STEDMAN

CONFIDENTIAL

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